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RAM SI... DEL MAYO SCHOOL OF ART LAHORE

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From Objects and Drawings in the South Kensington Museum.

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W. GRIGGS,

HANOVER STREET, PECKHAM,

LONDON, S.E.

The Journal of Indian Art and Industry.

WALL PAINTINGS

FROM SALIM CHISHTI'S TOMB, FATHPUR SIKRI, NEAR AGRA.

BY MR. EDMUND W. SMITH, M.R.A.S.,
ARCHÆOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA, N.W.P. & OUDH CIRCLE.

IN Volume VI., pages 65—68, of this Journal, there appeared specimens of some wall paintings which Mr. Edmund W. Smith, of the Archæological Survey of India, found in the Khwabgah, Faṭhpûr Sîkrî, when preparing his report on the architecture of the city for the Government of India. At the time of illustrating these wall paintings it was mentioned that we hoped in the future to be in a position to publish, from time to time, other specimens of the kind of mural decoration employed by Akbar in the embellishment of the buildings adorning his summer capital at Faṭhpûr Sîkrî. We now do so, and the twelve illustrations presented are all taken from Salîm Chishti's tomb, so well known to most who have visited India from the west, as being one of the most famous and beautiful tombs in Hindûstan.

For the benefit of those unacquainted with Faṭhpûr Sîkrî, we repeat what was said on page 65, Volume VI., about the city and the reasons which actuated Akbar to build his capital there.

Faṭhpûr Sîkrî lies some twenty-three miles to the west of Agra, celebrated for the Taj, Itimâd-ud-daulah's tomb, Chînî-Kâ-Rauza, the Fort, and other buildings belonging to the Moghul period. Faṭhpûr Sîkrî was built by Akbar, one of India's greatest and most enlightened rulers, between 1567 and 1606 A.D., or about the time of our Queen Elizabeth. The city is almost entirely constructed of red sandstone, and is built in a stone ridge enclosed on three sides by a high embattlemented wall of stone, pierced in six or seven places by gateways protected by heavy and grim semi-circular bastions of rubble masonry. It is difficult to say what induced Akbar to build a city so far away from his capital at Agra, but, if tradition is to be trusted, it was owing to the circumstance that, after the death of his twin sons, it was foretold by an old saint, Salîm Chishti by name, who lived the life of a hermit at Faṭhpûr Sîkrî, that another son would be born to him who would survive. This turned out to be the case, and the child, born at Faṭhpûr Sîkrî and called Salîm after the saint, eventually ascended the *gaddi* under the name of Jahângîr.

The city, likened by many to Pompeii, appears to have been deserted soon after Akbar's death, for Finch, in the early part of Jahângîr's reign, visited, and found it ruinate, lying like a waste district, and very dangerous to pass through at night. Had it not been for the splendid masjid and Sheikh Salîm Chishti's tomb, it would probably have fallen into complete decay.

During the last few years the Government of India has had a most thorough survey of all the most important buildings at Faṭhpûr Sîkrî prepared, and the investigations are presented to the public in the form of a report brought out by the Archæological Department of India, entitled "The Moghul Architecture of Faṭhpûr Sîkrî."

Salîm Chishti's mausoleum, from which the illustrations numbered 28 to 39 are taken, is one of the finest and most chaste pieces of Moghul architecture extant, and is one of the most renowned buildings in Northern India. Its fame is due to two causes: firstly, the quaintness and beauty of the design, coupled with the costliness of the material of which it is built (white marble); and secondly, from its being the burial-place of one of the most famous and revered religious men of Akbar's time. Salîm was held in intense superstitious reverence by Akbar, and his family occupied prominent positions about the emperor's court.

Salîm had become famous through living a hermit's life in a cave amongst the wilds of Faṭhpûr Sîkrî. He was a descendant of Shaikh Faradi-i-Shakarganj, and named Chishti after his spiritual father, who came from Chisht, a village in Persia. His distinguished and ascetic life attracted the notice of Akbar, who visited him on his return journey to Agra, after a successful campaign against the revolted Uzbec nobles.

Up to the time of the interview the emperor's children had died in infancy, and the object of his visit was to obtain the counsels, prayers and intercessions of the saint for an heir to the throne. Whether his spiritual exertions were effectual or not, one thing is certain, that some nine months after the visit a son was born to Akbar at Faṭhpûr Sîkrî, and the grateful parents endowed him with the name of Salîm, after the hermit, who forthwith became endeared to Akbar. The child lived and eventually ascended the throne under the name of Jahângîr. There is little doubt that his mother was Mariam-uz-Zamâni, the daughter of Raja Bihari Mall, and

sister of Raja Bhagwan Das.[1] It is due to this event that Faṭhpûr Sîkrî owes its origin, and the following quotation from Firishta bears this out: "The king" (Akbar), he writes, "considering the village of Sîkrî a particularly propitious spot, two of his sons having been born there, ordered the foundation of a city to be laid, which after the conquest of Guzarat he called Fathpur."[2]

The birthplace of Jahângîr is still pointed out to visitors. The historical chamber is within a ruinous palace to the south-west of the Jâmî' Masjid and not far from the Stonecutters' Masjid. It measures some 9 ft. 6 in. by 8 ft. 4 in., and is only 10 ft. high; it is windowless, and devoid of all ornamentation. Tradition tells us that on the queen becoming pregnant, Salîm advised Akbar to let her remain at Fathpûr Sîkrî whilst he was away at the wars; and it is possible, as Keene says in his *Guide to Agra*, "that the prince was a child substituted by the faqîr for a royal infant that was stillborn."[3] The palace in which the prince is said to have been born is now inhabited by a lineal descendant of Salîm. Close to it is Salîm's *Chillah-gah*, a room in which he performed his rigid penances. But to return to the saint's tomb. In size it falls far short of many others erected about the time, viz., A.D. 1571, but in respect of design and the costliness of material of which it is built it stands almost unrivalled and is "a perfect gem of art." It is built on a marble platform 3 ft. high and measures 47 ft. 11 in. each way. On the south side a portico 11 ft. 3 in. by 10 ft. projects, which is approached by a broad flight of white marble steps from the pavement in front of the shrine. A perambulatory, closed by pierced marble screens, entirely surrounds the cenotaph chamber, measuring 24 ft. 5 in. on the outside by 16 ft. 5 in. on the inside, which is entered through a small doorway, 4 ft. wide, on the south side of the tomb.

On the north, east, and west sides of the cenotaph chamber are windows. The cenotaph stands in the centre of the chamber, the sarcophagus, after the universal custom of the East, being beneath in a crypt. The entrance to the crypt was blocked up some years ago and no traces of it are visible, but it would probably be beneath the marble pavement in front of the south side of the tomb. At each side of the entrance and the windows of the cenotaph chamber, as well as upon the corners of the apartment, pilasters break forward into the verandah or perambulatory surrounding it. They are ranged opposite square piers into which the curtain marble screens enclosing the outer sides of the perambulatory are fixed.

The cenotaph chamber rises considerably above the verandahs, which are only some 12 ft. 6 in. in height. It is surmounted by a red sandstone dome, veneered on the outside with a greyish marble, but originally coated with cement. For a height of 3 ft. 9 in. the interior walls are lined with white marble dadoes, but above this they are of red sandstone finished off in cement, polished to imitate marble, and then elaborately decorated in colour.

The marble dadoes are painted on the surface with dahlias and lilies (see Plate 28). All the patterns are alike, with the difference that in some cases the dahlias are placed in the centre of the panel and are supported by lilies, whilst in others the lily occupies the centre place and the dahlias become the supporters. Around the outer sides is a pretty border.

The exterior sides of the walls of the cenotaph chamber are veneered like the interior with white marble, and each side is divided into three bays. The bays are panelled, and the upper panels are *sunk out* and inscribed in raised Tughra characters with verses from the Qurân. The letters are gilded and the ground is painted blue (Plate 30). The borders of the panels are of gold, chocolate and vermilion, separated by two narrow lines of white. the golden characters reposing upon a delicately carved leaf scroll. The style of work reminds one of the illuminated MSS. of the Middle Ages.

The reveals of the window openings upon the sides of the cenotaph chamber are exquisitely decorated in colour. They are arched over, and Plate 31 affords a sample of the kind of decoration on the soffit of the arch. The dado below is of white marble painted with a lily surrounded by a floral border. The arch over the top of the reveal springs from a small string moulding in white marble, which stops flush against the side of the marble screen filling the window openings. The coloured ornamentation upon the soffit (Plate 31) is a good sample of Oriental art. The colours are rich and bright and yet blend amicably.

The inner walls of Salîm's shrine were decorated in colour in keeping with the window reveals, but unfortunately they were restored in 1836, and the original colours and patterns were not truthfully reproduced. On each side of the windows, as well as the entrance, a large arch-shaped panel filled with foliage is painted. One is shown on Plate 32. The tawdry colouring beneath the arch is not in keeping with the decoration above it, and it is easily detected as the work of the restorer. The decoration in the spandrils above the arch has also suffered somewhat from restoration.

The floor of the cenotaph chamber is laid in marble mosaic; and the pattern, a geometrical one, is shown on Plate 33. The materials employed are white marble, *khatto* and *abri* from Jesalmere, near Jeypore; and

[1] *Ain-i-Akbari*, Blochmann's translation, page 619.

[2] Briggs' translation, Vol. II, page 234.

[3] Keene's *Guide to Agra*, page 59.

one of a peculiar tint, which varies considerably between a dark neutral tint and black, known as *sangmûsa*, which comes from Alwar. Enclosing the mosaic is a star border of deep chocolate and white marble.

The doorway leading into the cenotaph chamber from the perambulatory is of white marble. It is in two leaves, swung in marble sockets sunk in the pavements and lintel, on wrought iron pivots fastened to the door stiles by pieces of strap iron. Each leaf is pierced into three open traceried panels of geometrical designs.

The rails and stiles are plainly chamfered on the interior side and are richly moulded and carved on the exterior. The aperture of the entrance is arched at the top, but on a level with the springing of the arch a slab of stone crosses from jamb to jamb of the doorway, forming a flat soffit. The under-side of the slab is decorated in colour, and the design is illustrated on Plate 34. The ground is chocolate, studded with white flowers shaded blue with green leaves, enclosed within a lattice in deep indigo edged with white lines. Surrounding the whole is a rich border of dark indigo, upon which is a floral pattern in bronze heightened by small red and white flowers. The lower part of the jambs are veneered in white marble, and the inner reveals and the spandrils are ornamented with scrolls in dark yellow, intermingled with white flowers shaded red and blue. In the centre of each spandril is a leaf rosette (Plate 35) overlaid with leaf gold.

The scrolls, after encircling the pateræ in the centre, branch off into the corners of the spandrils in three beautiful spirals, each becoming smaller as it recedes from the origin. One twist grows gracefully out of the other, and the points of divergence are concealed by leaf sheaths. The end of each curl terminates in a full-blown and beautifully drawn lily in white, shaded red. The pattern, as seen on the drawing round the under-side of the arch, terminates on the top of the marble dado below, but the bordering is continued down to the floor by another pattern, which is presented at fig. 3, Plate 29.

The spandrils over the arch on the outer side of entrance are illustrated on Plate 36. In contradistinction to the inner spandrils, the ground is in vermilion and the tendrils of the scrolls in green, and where one scroll emerges from the other the diverging points are hidden by small golden rosettes, whilst white conventional flowers, shaded blue and red, terminate each spiral. In the centre of the spandril a lotus *patera* is carved in high relief in three tiers. The leaves are embellished in gold.

Over the lintel of the door is an exquisite fanlight of pierced white marble. The door architraves are richly decorated in colour, and details of the designs are given on Plate 29, fig. 1. The colours are most refined, and blend so beautifully that one seems to grow out of the other.

Fig. 2, Plate 33, exemplifies the mosaic ornamentation upon the sides of the raised plinth or platform upon which the tomb stands.

Salîm's cenotaph is of white marble, surmounted by a wooden canopy inlaid with mother-of-pearl tesseræ. The canopy measures 8 ft. 9 in. by 5 ft. 9 in., and is 10 ft. in height to the top, or 7 ft. 6 in. if measured to the cornice. At each corner is a splendid pillar, $4\frac{3}{4}$ in. in diameter (Plate 37), square at the bottom and octagonal above, crowned by finely carved cruciform-shaped bracket capitals which support the framework, $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. in thickness, carrying the canopied top. The under side of the canopy is strengthened by a cradling of small ribs springing from the top of the framing and stopping on a moulded ridge along the top, terminated at the ends by moulded pinnacles.

The outside of the canopy is entirely encrusted with mother-of-pearl laid in geometrical designs, bound at the corners and sides with copper. The cornice is worked with the fish-scale pattern so common to the period in which the mausoleum was built. Running through it is a battlemented pattern in ebony, which material is also freely used upon the four-armed bracket capitals, the sub-caps, and the bases of the columns supporting the canopy. The capitals and brackets are very intricately and delicately carved; and, in order to protect the fine inlaying upon them, the arrises of the mouldings are bound with copper.

The same design, or nearly the same, appears on each of the bases, but that upon one side of the base is unlike that on the other (see figs. 1 and 2, Plate 37). The inlaying is so intricate that it looks like damaskeen, but in mother-of-pearl instead of gold and copper wire. Each tiny piece of mother-of-pearl is exactly shaped and fitted into the allotted position previously prepared for it and then secured, as the drawing shows, with minute pins and shellac. The minute strips of ebony between each piece of mother-of-pearl are secured in like manner, and are perfectly flush with the face of the mother-of-pearl. It is impossible to describe the effect of the mother-of-pearl as seen in the dim light of the mortuary chamber. It is one of those things which almost defy description, and in order to realize its beauty it must be seen. The inlaying is most minutely and beautifully executed. There is nothing like it elsewhere in Northern India, and it is doubtful whether such an elegant piece of like workmanship exists in any other part of India.

Down to the present time Salîm is held in deep veneration, far and wide, alike by both Hindûs and Musalmans. Devotees from all parts of India worship at his shrine. Pilgrims stream in and out all day long; and

many a footsore, half-clad visitor from distant parts is to be seen bowed in silent prayer at the entrance to the shrine.

Abutting on the north-west side of Salîm Chishti's tomb is the Zanâna Rauza, or burial place of some of the female representatives of the Chishti family. The Rauza consists of two oblong chambers running parallel with the walls of the Masjid, separated down the centre by a partition wall. Both chambers are covered by an arched and ribbed roof, and are full of sarcophagi. The entrance to the Rauza is through an arched doorway enclosed by a rectangular architrave inlaid with encaustic tiling in blue (fig. 1, Plate 38). The effect of the tiling is pleasing, as it forms a striking contrast to the red sandstone of which the entrance is built. The entrance is formed in the centre of a large gateway in the middle of the south side of the quadrangle around which the great Masjid is built. Above it is a large archway surrounded by a border of carved geometrical tracery, details of which are exemplified on Plate 38, fig. 2.

Near the house set apart for the use of Akbar's Turkish Sultâna is a *hammâm*, or Turkish bath, measuring 58 ft. from north to south by 70 ft. from east to west. It is a plain building, laying no claim to architectural beauty. The walls are of rubble and brick coated with cement, and are unadorned by mouldings of any kind, and, speaking generally, there are no openings in them in the shape of doors or windows.

Although the outer aspect is so grim and prison-like, skill and taste have both been brought to bear upon the interior. The various rooms are domed over, and the soffits of the domes are painted with geometrical devices. Around the lower portions of the rooms are dadoes, some 3 ft. in height, finished off in coloured polished stucco. The colours employed vary according to the rooms. Samples of two of the dadoes are shown on Plate 39. There are no windows in the walls, and the rooms are lighted from grated circular openings in the tops of the domes. The soffits of the domes are goffered and finished off in polished white stucco, and, as mentioned above, were painted with geometrical patterns.

A fuller description of these baths, the Zanâna Rauza, and Salîm Chishti's tomb may be found in Part III. of Mr. Smith's Archæological Survey Report on the Moghul Architecture of Faṭhpûr Sîkrî, from which report much of the foregoing description has been taken.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

28—Coloured dado panels; 29—Detail of coloured borders; 30—Inscribed texts upon wall of shrine; 31—Coloured decoration on soffit of arched window opening; 32—Coloured spandril upon interior walls; 33—Mosaic pavement; 34—Painted soffit of entrance to cenotaph chamber; 35—Coloured spandril over interior of entrance to cenotaph chamber; 36—Coloured spandril over exterior of entrance to cenotaph chamber; 37—Detail of mother-o'-pearl tesseræ; 38—Inlaid architrave; 39—Samples of dado patterns.

Inches 12 9 6 3 1 2 3 4 Feet

SCALE OF FEET

Edwd. W. Smith

28.—COLOURED DADO PANELS.

Fathpûr Sîkrî : Salim Chishti's Tomb.

Decoration upon Architraves around Entrance to Cenotaph Chamber.

Border around Dadoes upon Interior Walls.

Border on bottom of Inner Reveals of Entrance to Cenotaph Chamber.

29.—Detail of Coloured Borders around Inner Entrance to Shrine.

Fathpûr Sikrî: Salim Chishti's Tomb.

30.—Inscribed Texts upon Wall of Shrine.

Fathpûr Sikrî: Salîm Chishti's Tomb.

Inches 12 9 6 3 1 Foot

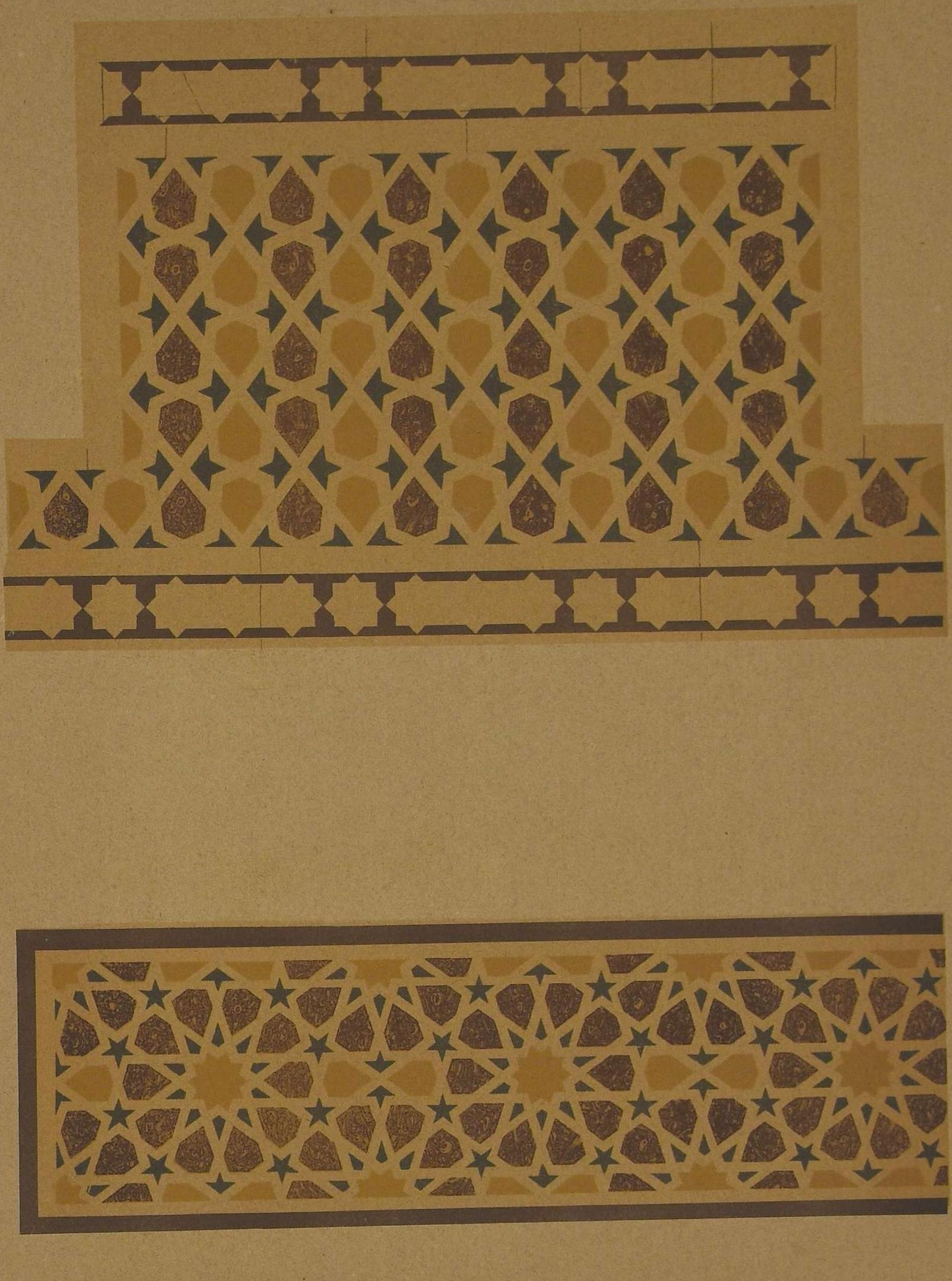
SCALE

Edmd. W. Smith

31.—Coloured Decoration on Soffit of Arched Window Opening.

Fathpûr Sîkrî: Salim Chishti's Tomb.

32.—COLOURED SPANDRIL UPON INTERIOR WALLS.
Fathpûr Sîkrî: Salim Chishti's Tomb.



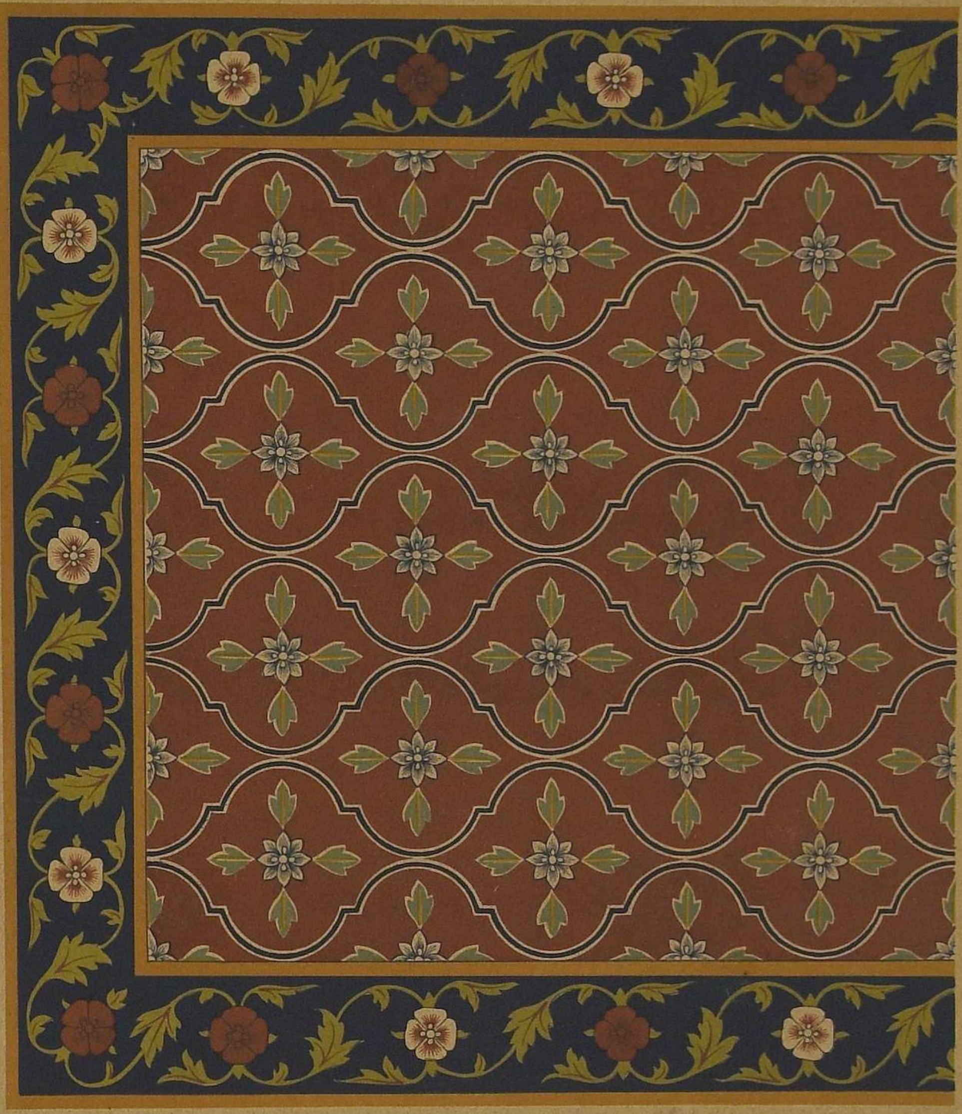
Inches 12 9 6 3 1 2 3 Feet

SCALE OF FEET

Edwd W Smith

33.—Mosaic Work on the Podium.

Fathpûr Sikrî: Salim Chishti's Tomb.



Inches 12 9 6 3 1 Foot

SCALE

Edwd W. Smith

34.—PAINTED SOFFIT OF ENTRANCE TO THE CENOTAPH CHAMBER.

Fathpûr Sîkrî: Salim Chishti's Tomb.

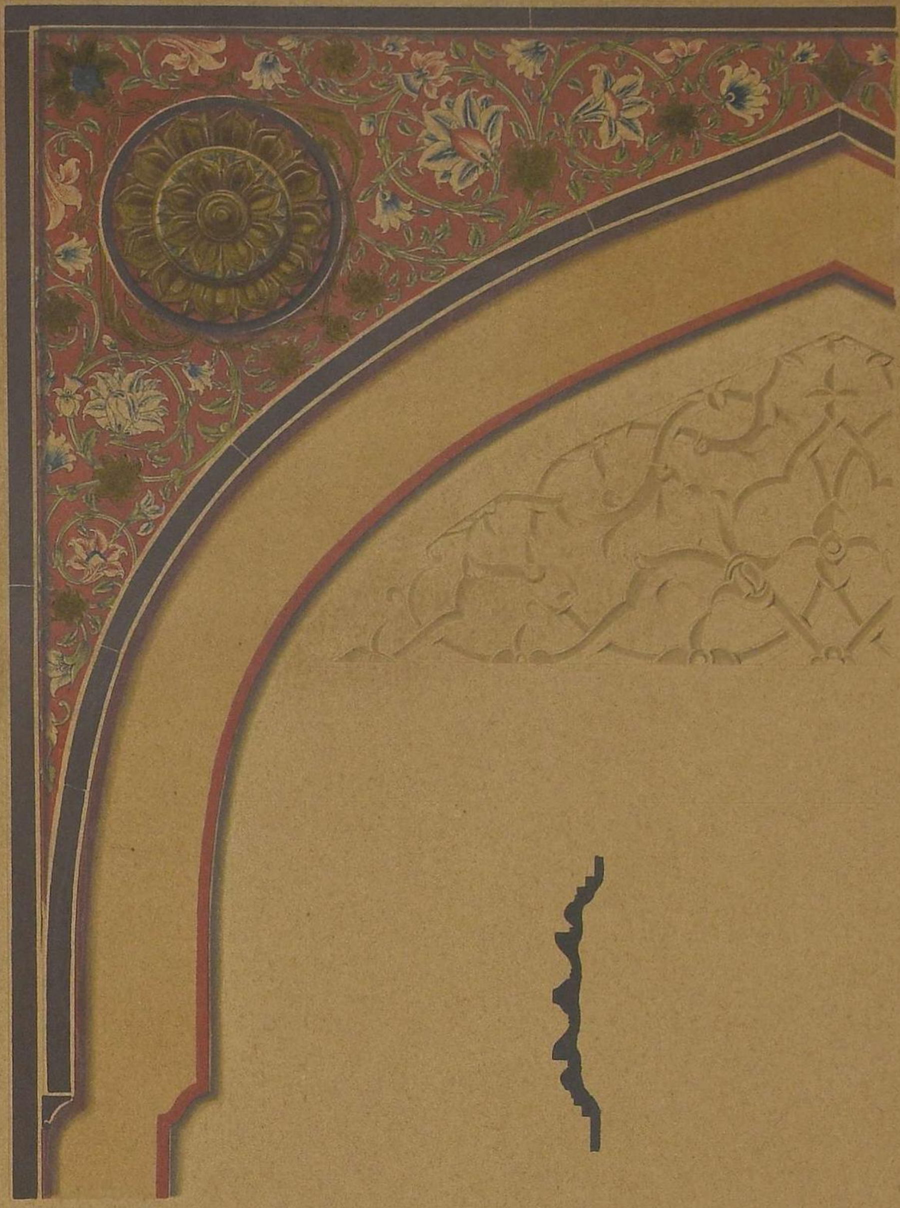
Inches 12 9 6 3 1 Foot

SCALE

Edwd. W. Smith

35.—Coloured Spandril over Interior of Entrance to the Cenotaph Chamber.

Fathpûr Sîkri: Salim Chishti's Tomb.



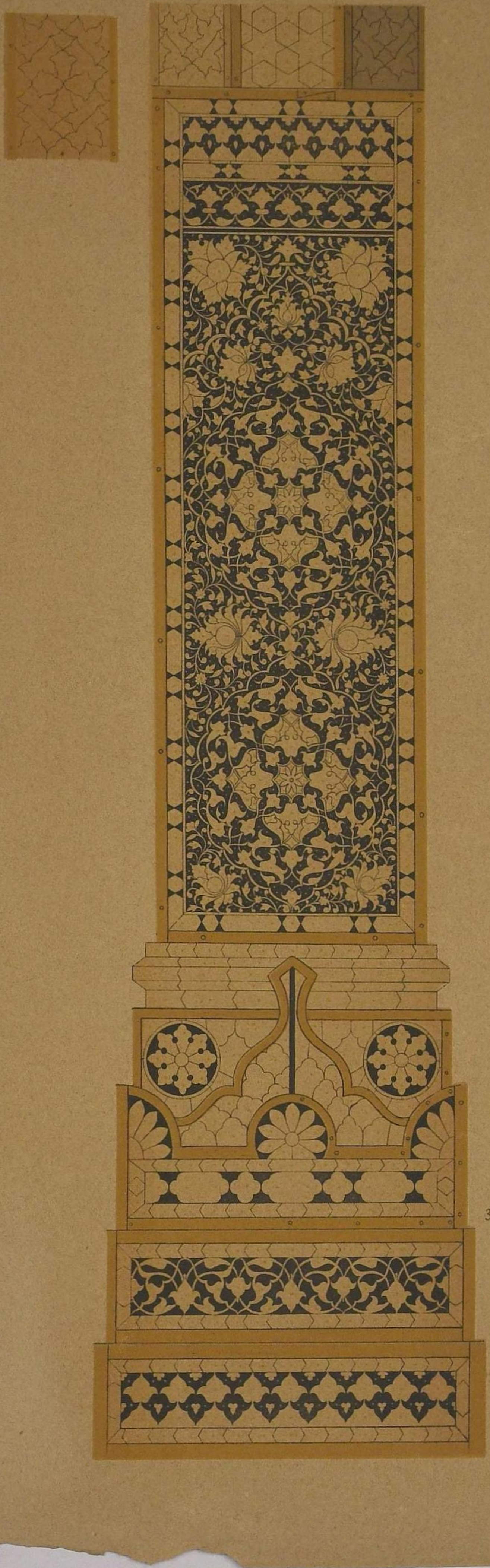
Inches 12 9 6 3 1 Foot

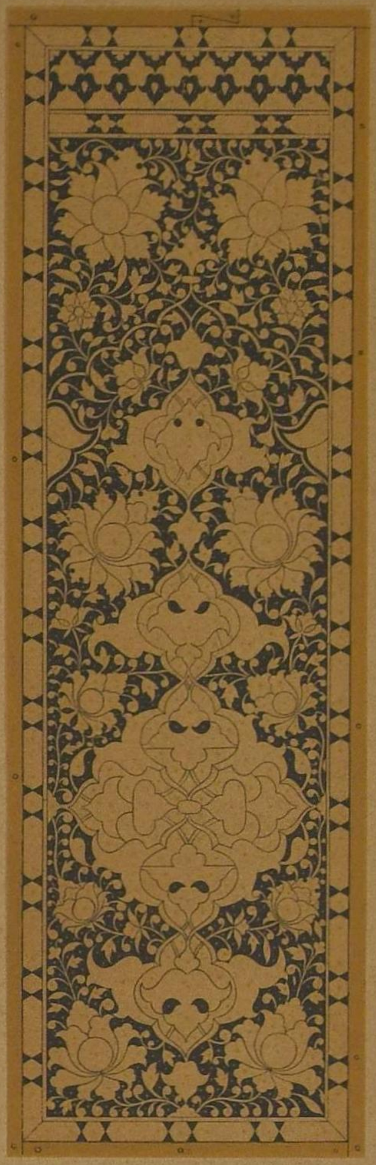
SCALE

Edmd. W. Smith

36.—Coloured Spandril over Exterior of Entrance to the Cenotaph Chamber.

Fathpûr Sîkrî : Salim Chishti's Tomb.





Side View

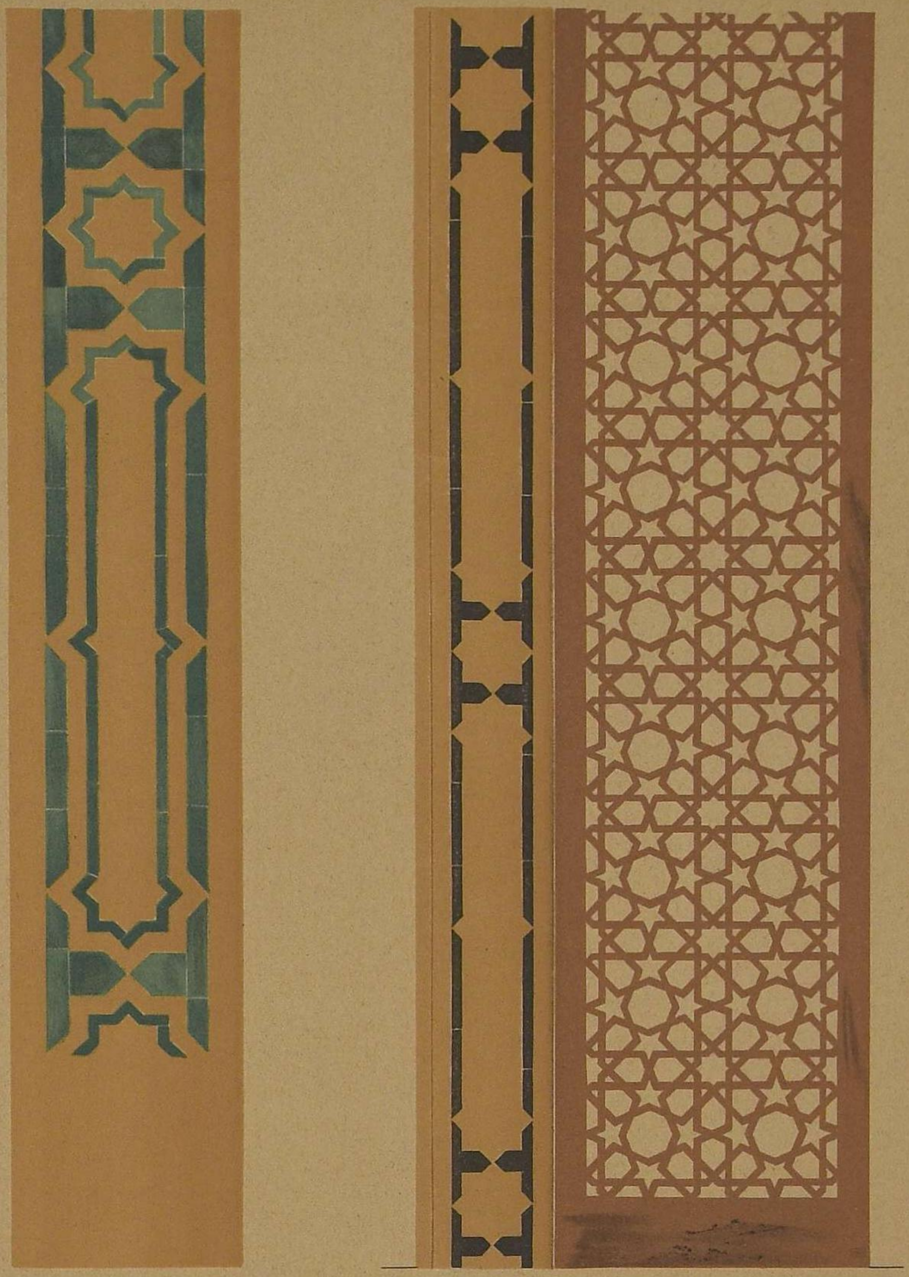
37.—DETAIL OF MOTHER-O'-PEARL TESSERÆ UPON THE BASES OF THE COLUMNS SUPPORTING CANOPY OVER THE CENOTAPH.

Fathpûr Sîkrí: Salim Chishti's Tomb.

3 6 Inches

SCALE

Edwd. W. Smith



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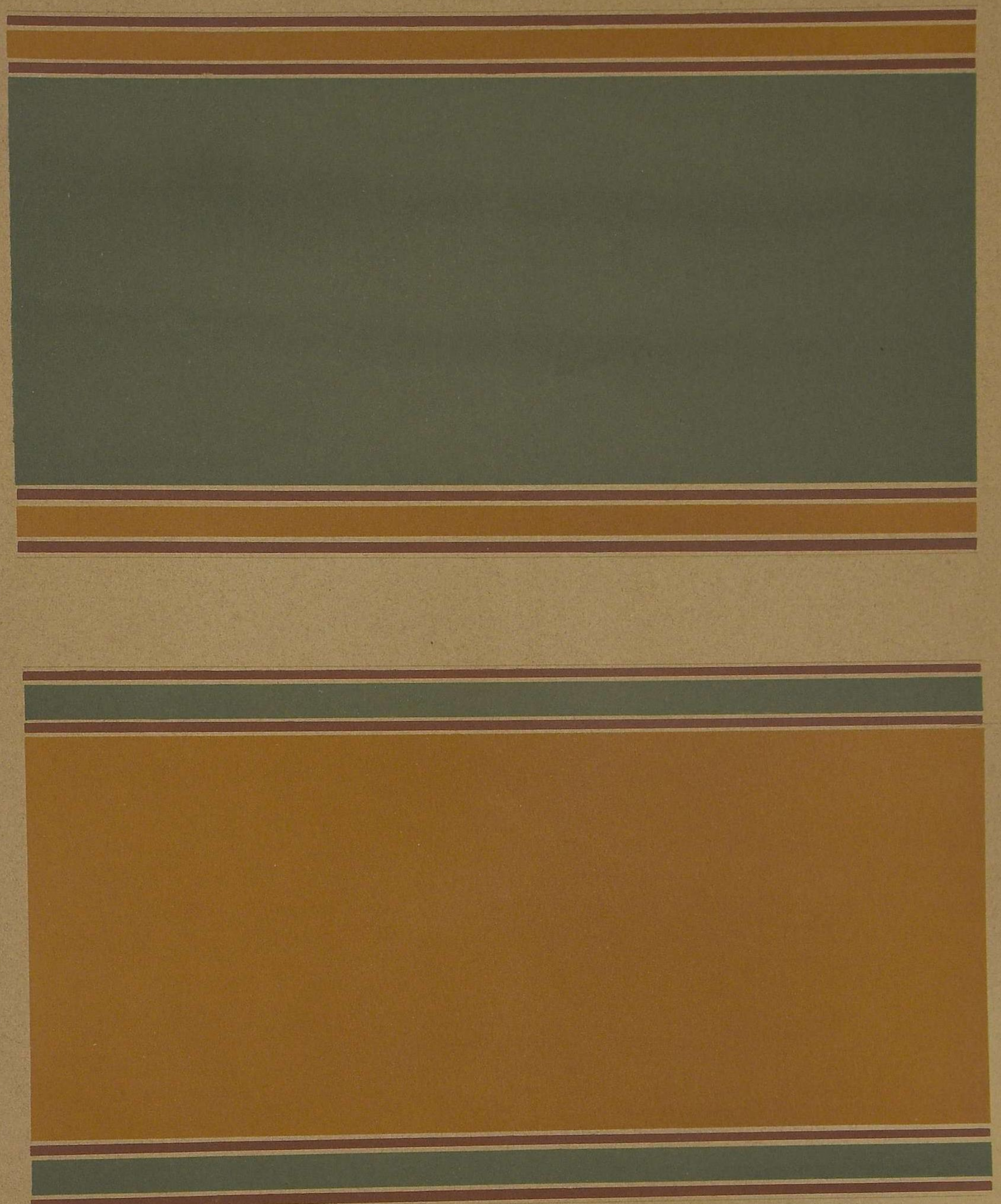
Inches 12 9 6 3 1 Foot

SCALE

38.—Inlaid Architrave around Entrance.

Fathpûr Sîkrî : Zanana Rauza.



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39.—Samples of Dado Patterns.

Fathpûr Sîkrî: Turkish Sultana's Bath.

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ALBUM OF JACOBE,

Master Workman at the Armoury, Greenwich

1590.

It is proposed to publish in facsimile the above-mentioned work as a valuable record of the Armourer's art as practised in England in the second half of the sixteenth century.

The Album contains drawings in ink and colours of suits of armour made by this master for several of the most famous courtiers and soldiers of the reign of Elizabeth.

Amongst these are suits for the Dukes of Finland and Norfolk; the Earls of Leicester, Sussex, Worcester, &c.; Lord Scrope; Sir John Smith, Sir Henry Lee, Sir C. Hatton, &c.

Special interest attaches to this MS., as it formerly belonged to the Harleian Library, and of the suits of armour therein figured some of the finest are still in existence. Of these the following may be mentioned:—Earl of Pembroke, K.G., now at Wilton; George, Earl of Cumberland, at Hothfield; Sir Christopher Hatton, sold last year from the Spitzer collection for £2080; Sir Henry Lee, K.G., Master of the Armoury to Queen Elizabeth and James I., now in the hall of the Armourers' and Braziers' Company; the Earl of Worcester, in the Tower of London.

Although armour in England was, at the time referred to, fast disappearing from use, the suits shown in the work were all of a high class of workmanship and remarkable for their excellence, no less than interesting as the personal and intimate panoply of some of the brightest stars of the golden age of Elizabeth.

It is hoped that the publication of this unique MS. may lead to the identification of other suits and portions of armour still scattered through the country, and as yet not correctly connected with famous names in English history.

The reproductions will be accompanied by a short note on the MS. and brief notices of the individuals for whom the suits were made.

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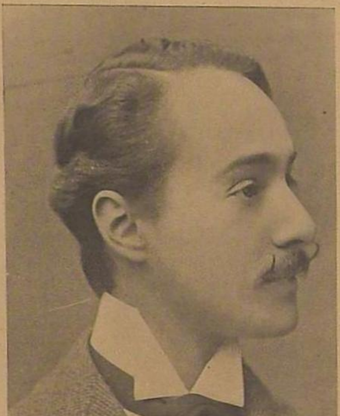

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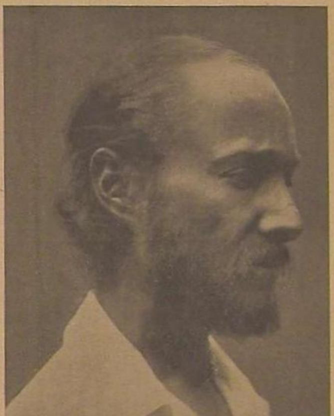

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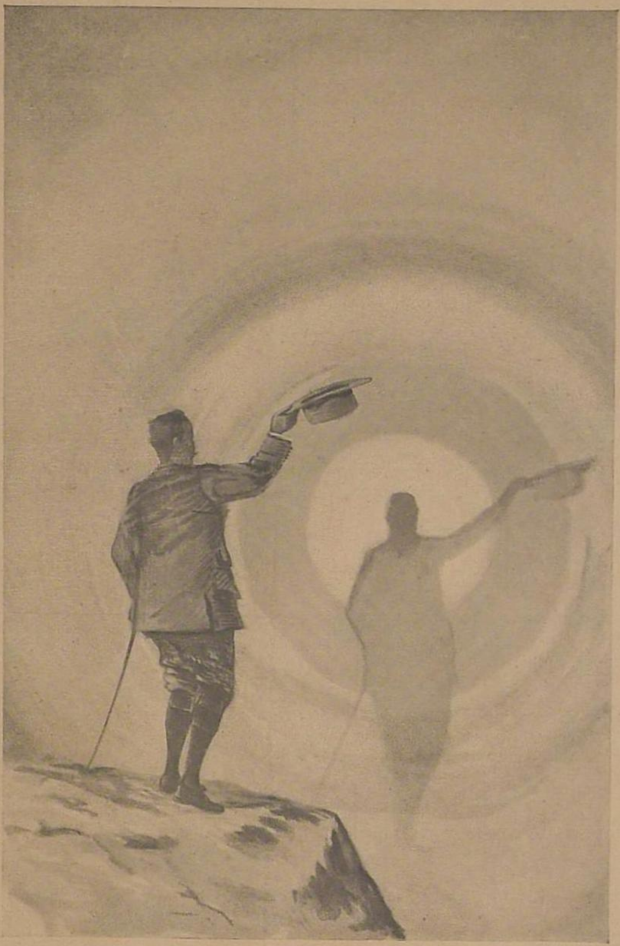
1898



THE SPECTRE

The stars were extraordinarily brilliant and the moon shone bright for a while over the panorama around me, and though it was a view of utter desolation, it had nevertheless a curious indescribable fascination. Below me, to the south, were mountainous masses buried in snow, and to the South-West and North-East were peaks even higher than the one on which I stood. To the north stretched the immense, dreary Tibetan plateau with undulations and intricate hill ranges, beyond which a high mountain range with snow peaks could just be perceived in the distance. I could see very little snow near by, except on the northern slope of the range I was standing on, and on the hill-tops which dotted the plateau.

I had barely taken it in, barely realised the wonder of nature asleep, when the mist again rose before me and I saw a gigantic phantom rising out of it. It stood in the centre of a luminous circle, a tall, dark figure in the folds of an enormous veil of mist. The effect was overwhelming, and it was only after some moments that I realised that the spectre wore my features, was a liquid presentation of my own proportions colossally enlarged; that I stood in the centre of a lunar rainbow, and that I was gazing on the reflection of myself in the mist. As I moved my arms, my body, or my head, the ghost-like figure moved, and I felt myself irresistibly changing my postures—oddly and nervously at first—then, with an awakening sense of the ridiculous in my actions—so as to make my image change and do as I did.

AN OLD SHOKA

Sample Page] [The rule shows the size of paper

"Sahib, do you see that island?" exclaimed the Kutial, pointing at a barren rock that emerged from the lake. *"On it,"* he continued, *"lives a hermit Lama, a saintly man. He has been there alone for many years, and he is held in great veneration by the Tibetans. He exists almost entirely on fish, and occasional swan's eggs, and only in winter, when*

PANORAMA OF RAKAS

RAMBANG GIRLS

In the

To Mr.

IN THE FO

LANDOR, *in* T

HEINEMANN. F

Date

ND MANSAROWAR LAKES

the lake is frozen, is communication established with the shore, and supplies of tsamba *are brought to him, for they have no boats in Rakastal, nor any way of constructing rafts, owing to the absence of wood. The hermit sleeps in a cave, but generally comes out in the open to pray to Buddha."* During the following night, when everything was

Forbidden Land

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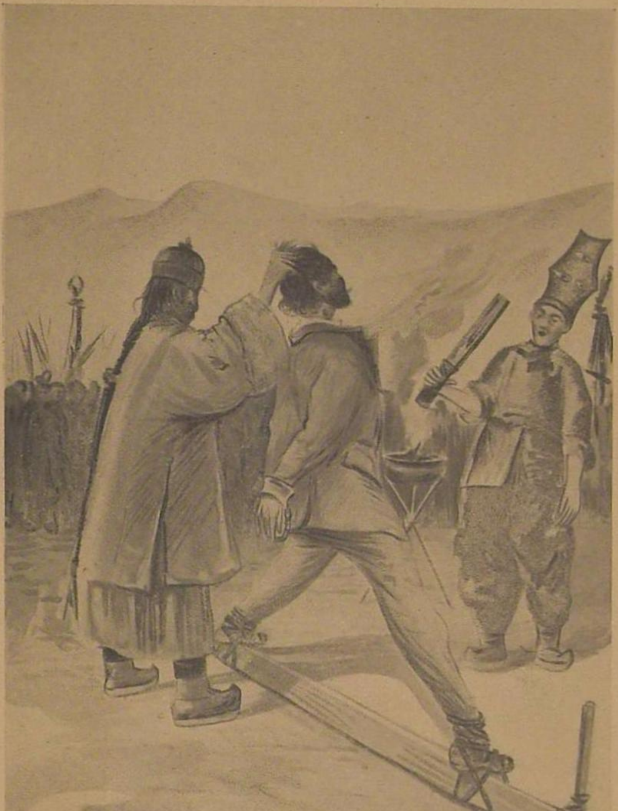
FUNERAL DANCE

BURIED IN SNOW



THE HOT-IRON TORTURE